

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2000-984

January 3, 2001

VERIZON NEW ENGLAND INC. D/B/A
VERIZON MAINE
Request for Approval of
Interconnection Agreement with
AT&T Wireless Services, Inc.

ORDER APPROVING
INTERCONNECTION
AGREEMENT WITH
AT&T WIRELESS SERVICES,
INC.

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

In this Order, we approve an interconnection agreement between Verizon New England Inc. d/b/a Verizon Maine (Verizon Maine) and AT&T Wireless Services, Inc. (AWS), pursuant to section 252 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

On December 8, 2000, Verizon Maine filed a negotiated interconnection agreement with AWS, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252, enacted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Interconnection agreements provide for interconnection between an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) and another telecommunications carrier, including a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC). An interconnection agreement may allow a telecommunications carrier to purchase unbundled network elements, or local services at a discounted wholesale rate (the discount reflecting avoided cost), or both, from an ILEC (or CLEC).

The agreement applies to "Broadband Commercial Mobile Radio Service" (Broadband CMRS), defined in the agreement as "interconnected two way, point-to-point, simultaneous full duplex wireless service offered for profit to the public or such classes of eligible users as to be effectively available to a substantial portion of the public but shall exclude paging service or other wireless services as may be determined by the FCC or the Commission as being entitled to different termination compensation than Broadband CMRS."

AWS will pay to Verizon Maine the interconnection prices contained in the voluntary agreement that was reached pursuant to arms-length negotiations between the parties. The pricing standards contained in 47 U.S.C. § 252(d) apply only to arbitration proceedings under section 252(b) and not to negotiated agreements under section 252(a). Verizon Maine does not represent that the prices contained in the agreement are consistent with the section 252(d) pricing standards or with any other state or federal policy.

Section 252(e)(2) states that a state commission may reject a negotiated agreement only if it finds that "the agreement (or portion thereof) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement" or if "the implementation of such agreement or portion is not consistent with the public interest, convenience and

necessity." We received no comments by the comment deadline set in a December 15, 2000 Notice of Agreement and Opportunity to Comment. We do not make either of the findings set for in section 252(e)(2) for rejection, and we therefore approve the agreement.

We qualify our approval in two respects, however, and reserve findings on future potential issues. First, we reserve judgment on whether the rates contained in the agreement are reasonable from the perspective of Verizon Maine's retail ratepayers. Verizon Maine is presently under an alternative form of regulation (AFOR) ordered by the Commission in Docket No. 94-123. The AFOR began in December, 1995. Under the AFOR, Verizon Maine bears the risk of lost revenues resulting from rates that are too low. In Docket No. 99-851, we have continued the AFOR until May 30, 2001. We do not resolve whether Verizon Maine is receiving reasonable compensation from any CLECs that may avail themselves of the rates provided to AWS pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252(i).

Second, section 271(c) of the Act, 47 U.S.C. § 271(c), requires that the Bell Operating Companies (BOCs) meet certain requirements before they are allowed to provide interLATA service (the so-called "competitive checklist"). Under section 271(d)(3), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) must determine whether the BOC has met the competitive checklist before granting the BOC authority to provide interLATA service within its region. Prior to making that determination, the FCC must consult with state commissions to verify the compliance of the BOC with the checklist. Our approval of this agreement should not be construed as a finding that Verizon Maine has met those requirements.

If AWS wishes to provide public utility services other than mobile telecommunications services as defined in 35-A M.R.S.A. § 102(9-A), it must seek Commission authorization to provide those services pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 2102, and we will require AWS to maintain schedules of rates, terms, and conditions pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 304. The terms and conditions shall specify the areas in which the utility will actually provide originating and terminating local exchange service, and may do so by reference to incumbent local exchange carrier exchanges rather than by municipalities.

The agreement filed by Verizon Maine provides for interconnection between AWS and Verizon Maine's network in Maine. If AWS seeks to interconnect with networks maintained by independent local exchange carriers in Maine, it must seek a termination, suspension, or modification of the exemption contained in 47 U.S.C. 251(f)(1)(A).

ORDERING PARAGRAPHS

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
Nugent
Diamond

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 30 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 73, et seq.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.